

Cedar Park History

In January 1836, a group of Texas Rangers, under the command of Captain Tumlinson, erected a blockhouse on Brushy Creek. It became known as Block House and Tumlinson Fort after the Ranger Commander, Captain Tumlinson. The fort was built on a spring 2 miles north of the site of Cedar Park. It was abandoned as the war with Mexico intensified. Later, Indians burned the fort which was believed to be the first one constructed in Williamson County.

Beginning in February 1838, several residents were awarded land patents for service during the Texas War for Independence. Patents were issued to Rachel Saul, John Dillard, Samuel Daymon, Richard Duty, M.D. Anderson, R.G. Anderson and S.J. Dover. Today, most of this land is within the Cedar Park city limits.

Rock quarrying began in Cedar Park as early as 1850. It was local and on a very small scale. In about 1897, the rock, formed eons ago by sea water, silt and decaying shellfish, called shell stone, was quarried in earnest and Cedar Park became the heaviest freight loader between Austin and Llano. "Cordova Cream" and Cordova Shell" were shipped nation-wide as building materials.

The original Buttercup Community was located a few miles South of Running Brushy in the middle 1800's. Thomas "Doc" Crumley, part Cherokee Indian, wore his hair in two long braids and gathered roots and herbs to treat his patients. He served as a medical consultant to several Austin doctors. Buttercup had a store, cotton gin a post office and was a stage coach stop. The post office was in the Dodd store and Lillie Dodd served as postmistress. Buttercup was also called Doddboro and Doddville after the founding Dodd family. Buttercup Community now lies beneath the water behind the conservation dam built west of highway 183 just south of Cypress Creek Road in 1956.

The John (Jack) Champion Cemetery was established in December 1862, upon the death of John's first wife Naomi Jane Standefer Champion. John served in the Civil War as a private in the 27th Brigade of Williamson County in 1863, and also served as the Williamson County Sheriff in 1869. John was interred in the cemetery in December 1909.

By 1868, an early church was the New Hope Baptist Church that was built on the headwaters of Block House Creek. In 1870, a new log church was built on the same site. In 1871, Rev John L. Minnick served as Minister of the church. Early members of the church were members of the Trammel, Hicks, Noble, Inman, Long and Barefoot families. In 1879, the congregation built a new frame church one mile southeast of the original location. In later years, the church was rebuilt of brick on the same site near the intersection of New Hope Road and Highway 183. The New Hope Cemetery was used by members of the church. Some of those buried there are the Inman's, Davis', Simpson's, Trammell's, Tubbs', Whitts', Schneiderwind's and Artie Henry. An Association governs the cemetery.

In May 1871, While enroute to Kansas driving a herd of cattle, George W. Cluck, his wife Harriet (Hattie) and their two children, were confronted by a group of bandits. The bandits demanded five hundred head of cattle, to which George Cluck responded, "you are not to get any of our cattle." He told the bandits his men "had been raised on rattlesnakes and wildcats." "My wife, who's fondling that double-barreled shot gun there, is herself, one of the best shots to come out of Texas." Shortly, the bandits were out of sight. Some books relate that Harriet Cluck was the "Queen of the Chisholm Trail."

George Cluck recorded a deed for 239 ½ acres in December 1873. He built a log cabin there and in October 1874 he bought an additional 632 ½ acres. This was the same year that his wife Harriet Cluck became a postmistress of Running Brushy, as the area was called. The name Running Brushy came from a heavy flowing spring on the Cluck home place. The spring continues to run to this date.

In 1874, George Cluck built a stage stand for the Austin to Lampasas Springs stage line that passed through his land. He provided a place where stage coach horses could be fed and rested for the next trip. Normally there were up to twelve horses available most of the time. George was not compensated for his services. The only stage line item remaining is the 17 mile marker formerly located in front of the Middle Brook Apartments.

The Minnick family cemetery, est. 1876, is located in the Quest Village subdivision on Turnbow Trail. Rev. John L. Minnick's year-old son Jasper was the first interred there. Reverend Minnick, a Baptist, who served as the pastor of the New Hope Baptist Church in 1871, was buried there in 1895 and his second wife, Louisa Elizabeth was interred there in 1913. Her father, David Lewis, Moses Richey (Roy) Minnick and other Minnick family are also there. Other family relatives Johnny Simpson, H.S. and Lou Richey lie by several unmarked graves. Moses Richey (Roy) Minnick died after being shot by his neighbor, J.H. Wade, during an argument over a fence line.

The rail road was constructed through Running Brushy in 1882. It gradually put an end to the stage line as more people began to ride the train. The town name of Running Brushy was changed to Brueggerhoff, after a rail road official in 1883.

In about 1887, George and Harriet Cluck sold 1 ½ acres for \$1.00 to the Trustees of the Running Brushy Community School. The Trustees were George Cluck, J.N. Stewart and G.F. McRae. A one-room school-church was constructed on the east side of the rail road tracks. The first Sunday morning services were Church of Christ and later a Methodist group used the building on Sunday afternoons. Mr. George Allen became superintendent of the community school in 1908. In 1920, Thomas L. Allen was appointed trustee of the Cedar Park School District.

The school building, then more than 40 years old, was in need of repair. Allen soon consolidated Cedar Park with Block House and both schools closed and consolidated to form the new White Stone School in 1923. The building was built of native rock donated by the Allen Quarry. Its location was on the NW corner of Hwy 183 and RR 1431. In 1952, White Stone consolidated with Leander ISD. The White Stone School was remodeled in 1984 and later dismantled because of roadway improvements. The original Cedar Park school/church that was abandoned for two generations eventually fell to the ground.

In 1877, George Cluck purchased more land to swell his holdings to more than 1000 acres. A limestone quarry was developed west of Cedar Park where large limestone blocks were quarried and shipped by wagon to Houston, Austin and other cities. Most notably, the blocks were used in the construction of the Ross Sterling home and Herman Hospital in Houston, the UT library, an Austin post office and the San Jacinto Monument.

In 1887, The Cluck's built a "storehouse" on the east side of the railroad tracks. Emmet Cluck built his home just east of the store and was instrumental in changing the town's name from Brueggerhoff to Cedar Park.

Also, in 1887, the railroad needed additional land for buildings. George Cluck sold them several acres for \$1.00. The land was used for construction of a train depot, a combination school and church and a park. The park was decorated with trees, shrubs, flowers and benches. Besides flowers, raised beds were filled with colored pebbles arranged in several patterns. "The Park", as the area became known, was a destination for Austinites wanting an outing. They would ride the train to Cedar Park, picnic and stroll the area and return home on the afternoon train. Thus "Austin's first country club" was created. A railroad foreman's house was built on the west side of the tracks in 1881 and moved to the east side in the early 1900's.

Barbed wire was invented in 1873 and was introduced into Texas in 1891. George Cluck was the first in the Cedar Park area to take full advantage of the new product by opening a cedar yard where he sold cedar posts. He shipped posts to more distant points by wagon and later by rail. Other Cedar Park residents, such as M.H. Reed, S.H. Hays and F.W. King, opened cedar yards in the area. The term Cedar Chopper emerged. In 1930, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service added more impetus to the cutting of cedar with its program to rid the land of cedar. With all the cutting there were numerous cedar stumps left in the area which were of no value. A cedar mill was constructed on the south bank of Cluck Creek near the present intersection of 183 and Cypress Creek Road. The stumps were ground up and sold as floor sweep. The mill burned in 1940 and was never rebuilt.

George Thomas Allen, son of Russel Allen, bought a one hundred acre ranch NW and adjoining the Cluck property. In 1897, a Mr. Burns leased the land and operated a quarry with equipment he brought in. The saws were powered by wood burning steam engines and the derricks were hand cranked. George T. Allen received \$1.00 per carload of stone. The mill wagon, powered by a four mule team, was a wide-tired vehicle with a built up platform. It was used to transport the stone blocks to the rail road from the quarry. Later, a steam tractor was used. In 1910, after Burns completed a building he had started in Austin he sold his quarrying equipment to George T. Allen. Soon, Emmet Cluck, Allen's brother in law, became a partner in the quarry. Emmet soon terminated the partnership and opened his own quarry on Cluck property. In 1929, a spur rail line was built from the quarry to the main rail line. In the early 1950's, R.K. Allen added a limekiln on the site of the George Allen property. Road base made at the site was used to stabilize road beds constructed by Federal and State highway agencies. Texas Quarry, Inc. leased and operated the site until the early 1970's when the quarries were closed

In Nov. 1899, the Henry D. Bonnet Cemetery was created when Louisa Bonnet died. She was Henry D. Bonnet's first wife. She died during child birth and her twin children are buried beside her. Henry was buried there in 1940 as was an unidentified male friend of Henry's. The Bonnet cemetery is located on a plateau in the middle of a rock quarry on Lime Creek Road.

In 1901, the Cluck family set aside seven plus acres as a cemetery at Park Street and Old Highway 183. When the new highway was constructed it divided the land leaving ½ acre on the east side of the highway. The Sonic restaurant is on that site today. In the back part of the cemetery are buried George and Harriet Cluck, their children, Clarence, Dave, Emmet Cluck and his wife Ora and several grandchildren. Other names that appear often are Harrell, Jackson, Maynard, McRae, Moore, Stewart and Wade. An association governs the cemetery.

The population of Cedar Park in 1936 was 200, but by 1960 it dropped to 100. Many older residents had died and the younger ones moved away to seek jobs. In 1942, Roscoe Faubion purchased several acres from Emmet Cluck's descendents. The old building was torn down and a new one was built in its place on Old Highway 183. The new building was a combination post office, grocery store and gas station. It was the hub of the community for several years. In 1974, the Cedar Park Post Office had over 800 box holders. Some of those remaining operated three grocery stores.

Roscoe Faubion leased his store to Don Webster. Taylor Wade and Sam Blair each opened and operated combination grocery stores and filling stations. The Wade and Hodge store at Whitestone was sold to Richard Ward who also opened a cedar yard. The cedar yards of Dick Boatright and Jack Minnick closed at about this time.

In 1943, the State Dairy and Hog Farm was created to raise food for the State Hospital and also to provide a place for patients to reside and work. They leased Cluck land for their farm. They provided the first fire control for the area and built a dam to create Twin Lakes Park.

In 1973, two groups of citizens petitioned the Court to become incorporated. The Judge ordered the petitions consolidated. After court approval and an election, Kenneth Bell became the first Mayor and a city council and a town marshal was elected.

In 1974, the Cedar Park Post Office became a second-class post office and a new building was opened in January 1979 on Highway 183. That was the year home delivery began within the city limits. The post office building on Old Highway 183 was demolished in 2000 when a new post office was opened on Highway 1431.

In 1987, a City charter election created the 6th council seat.

Since then, more commissions have been created and task forces appointed to deal with roads, parkland and city facilities. (EDC, CPDC, 4A&4B, Road Task Force, Tourism and Convention Bureau, Historic and Cultural Preservation Commission, A Regional Mobility Association, a Historic Preservation Officer and several mayoral taskforces.) Construction of a Town Center has begun and a new combined Municipal Court Building and Police Station has been dedicated.

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